

Getting Scripture Right

Let's use Hermeneutics to solve some Scriptural dilemmas



“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ **Acts 2:38**”

Based on other Scriptures, “for” should be interpreted “because of.”

We are baptized because our sins have been forgiven – **not** to have them forgiven



“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” **Phil 2:12**

Does this passage teach we have the freedom to “invent” our own version of salvation, or that we can “work” for our salvation?



We cannot “invent” our own version of salvation
We cannot “work for” or “earn” our salvation

It is important to notice that Paul says “work out” your own salvation – not “work for”



So then, what does Paul mean when he says, “work out your own salvation?”



1. Phil 2:12 is addressed to people who are already saved



2. Paul is not discussing Soteriology (how to be saved), but Sanctification (how to mature once we're saved)



3. Though we don't earn our salvation, it's incorrect to believe what we do has no effect on our salvation

Scripture teaches that faith without works is dead (Js 2:17)



The idea that teaching obedience is the same as earning salvation is as incorrect as the idea that parents who require their children to obey are teaching them that obedience earns them membership in the family.



4. Is a believer's sanctification dependent on them or on God?



- This is an old debate between **passive** and **active** sanctification



- We “work out” our salvation = “carry out”
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” Phil 2:12

- God “works in” our salvation

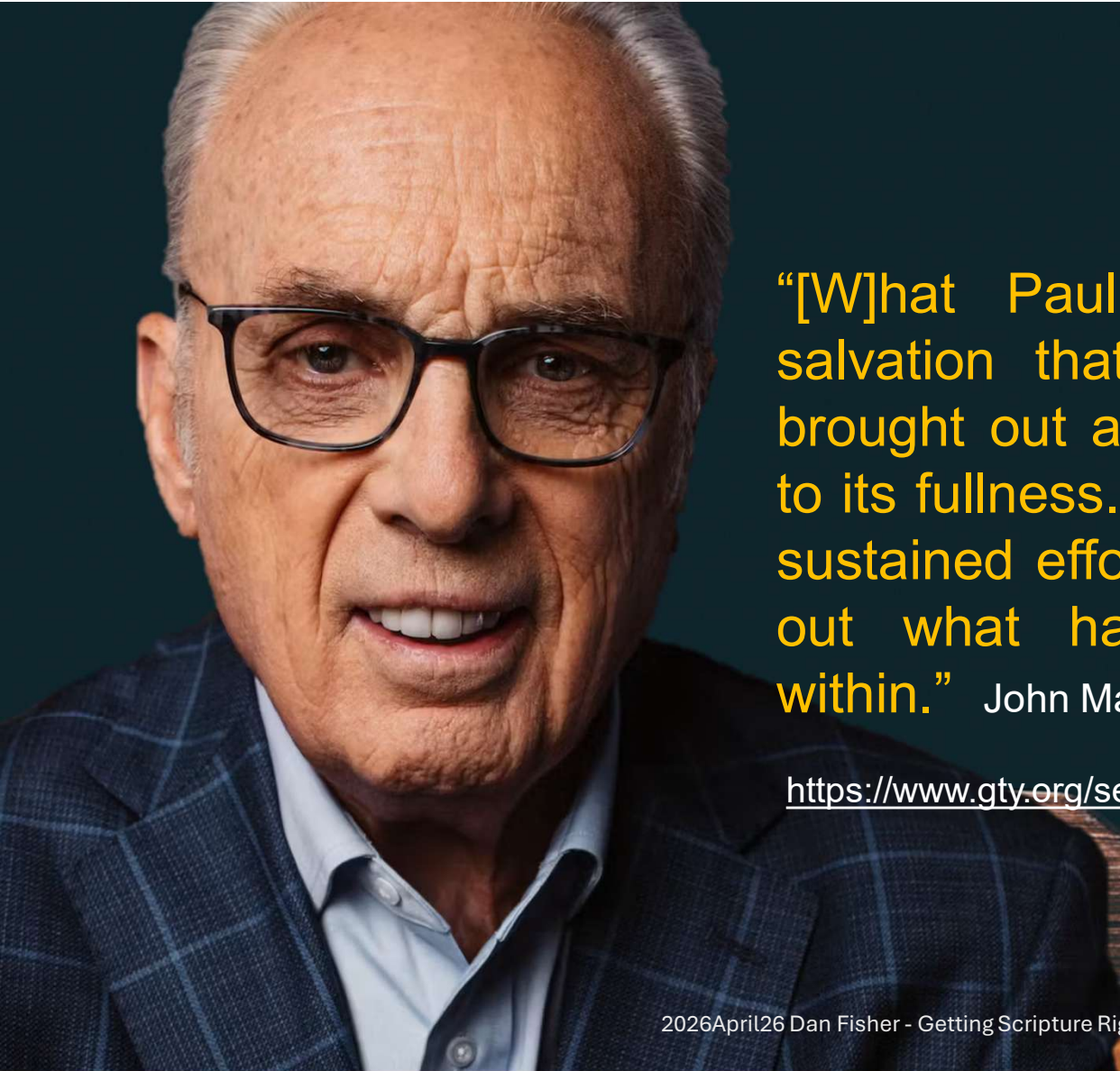
“it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Phil 2:13



“**working/carrying out**” is a present-tense imperative verb which indicates an ongoing process

It means to cultivate, bring to fruition, or manifest the salvation already given by grace. It is the process of sanctification (living out faith) rather than justification (being saved).





“[W]hat Paul is saying is this: the salvation that is in you needs to be brought out all the way to its fulfillment, to its fullness. It really is a command for sustained effort and diligence in working out what has already been planted **within.**” John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/sermons/50-19/god-at-work-in-you-part-1>

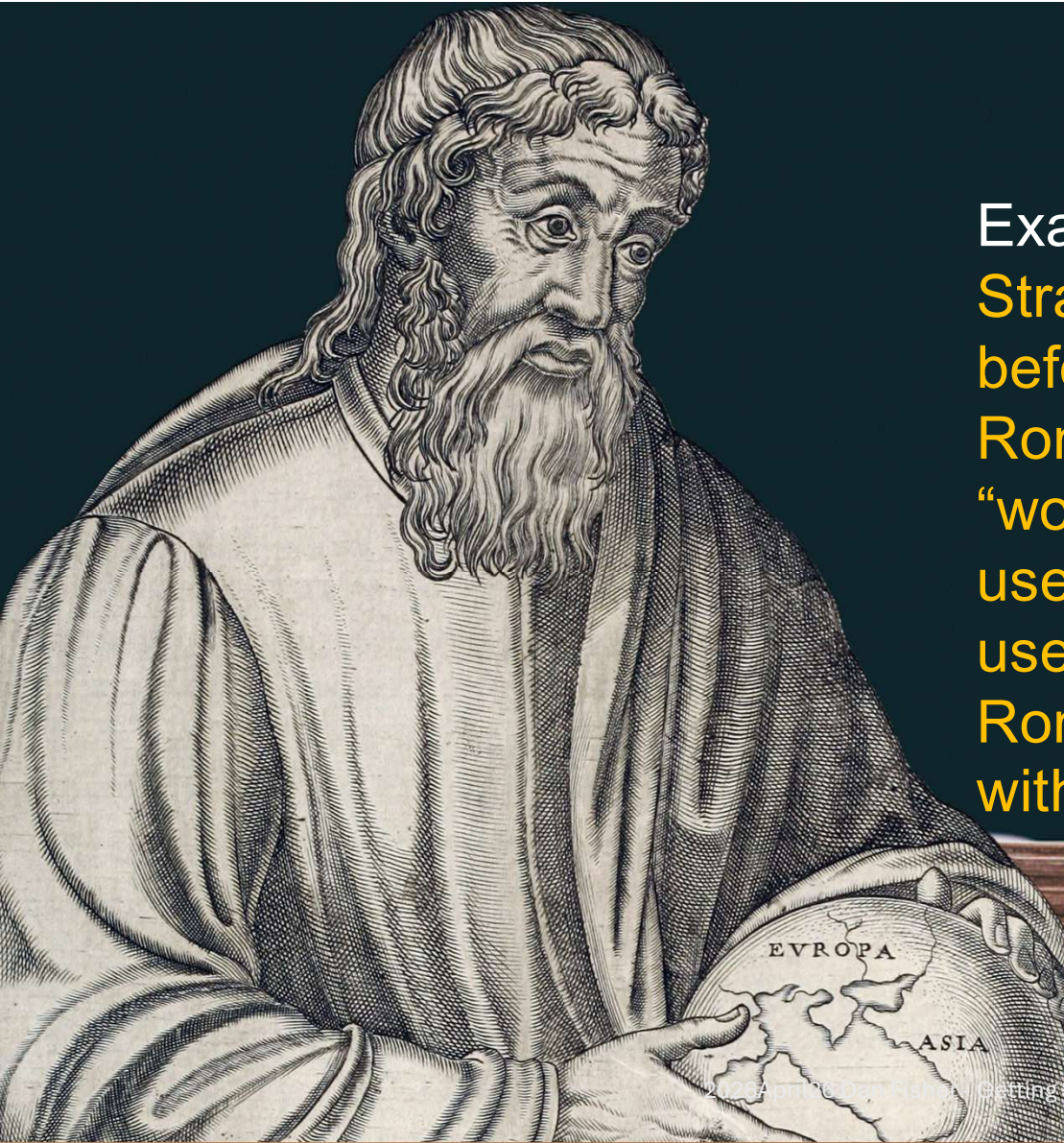
It is how saved people live out their salvation that God has graciously given them by employing themselves to things which accompany/reflect salvation

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” Jn 14:15

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” Phil 1:27

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 Jn 1:7





Example: The Roman scholar, Strabo, who lived some 60 years before Christ, described how the Romans, working mines in Spain, “worked out” those mines. He used the very same verb Paul used in Phil 2:12. Strabo said the Romans were “extracting out from within” the mines all their riches.

“work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility. For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose.” **J.B. Phillips New Testament**

Paul admitted that he was still being sanctified:

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **Phil 3:12**



“Gird up the loins of your mind (preparing your minds for action, ESV)” 1 Pet 1:13
“pull in the loose ends of your life”

“I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.” Rom 6:19

“Present your body a living sacrifice ... and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed” Rom 12:1-2



“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” **1 Cor 9:24-27**

“beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness [bringing holiness to completion, ESV] in the fear of God.” **2 Cor 7:1**



Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ...

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” **Col 3:5,12-17**



“With fear and trembling” implies a serious, humble approach to spiritual life with a profound reverence for God knowing that we will answer for what we do in the body whether good or bad (2 Cor 5:10)

Pt 4d: Using Hermeneutics to solve some Scriptural dilemmas



What did Jesus mean when He said, “Unless you do not ‘hate’ your family, you cannot be My disciple”?

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” Lk 14:26



We must first establish what we do know and
then work from there



1. What He could not have meant:

- That we should not love our family members
- We are commanded by God to love one another – especially our family members



“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Mt 22:39

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Jn 13:35

“Honor your father and your mother” Ex 20:12

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” Eph 5:25-33

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² ‘Honor your father and mother’” Eph 6:1-2



2. So, what did He mean?

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” **Mt 10:37**



- When Jesus said “hate family” it appears He was using an Aramaic idiom meaning to “not prefer” or to put second in importance
- He was saying our love for God must take priority over everything/everyone



Did Jesus say He came to cause division and conflict instead of peace?

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.” **Mt 10:34-36**



1. **What He could not have meant:**
That He is all about division and conflict



“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” **Is 9:6**

“And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, ‘Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.’” **Lk 19:41-42**

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace & for mutual upbuilding.” **Rom 14:19**

“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” **Eph 4:3**



2. So, what did He mean?

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” **Jn 15:18-19**



- Jesus' message causes inevitable division and conflict, rather than immediate earthly peace
- It signifies that following him requires ultimate allegiance, which can disrupt personal relationships, family ties, and social order
- The “sword” represents a separating force, not literal violence



Are women saved by bearing children?

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” **1 Tim 2:13-15**



1. What Paul could not have meant

- Salvation is based upon works/performance



“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Eph 2:8-9

“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”
Titus 3:5



- That women must be married to be saved

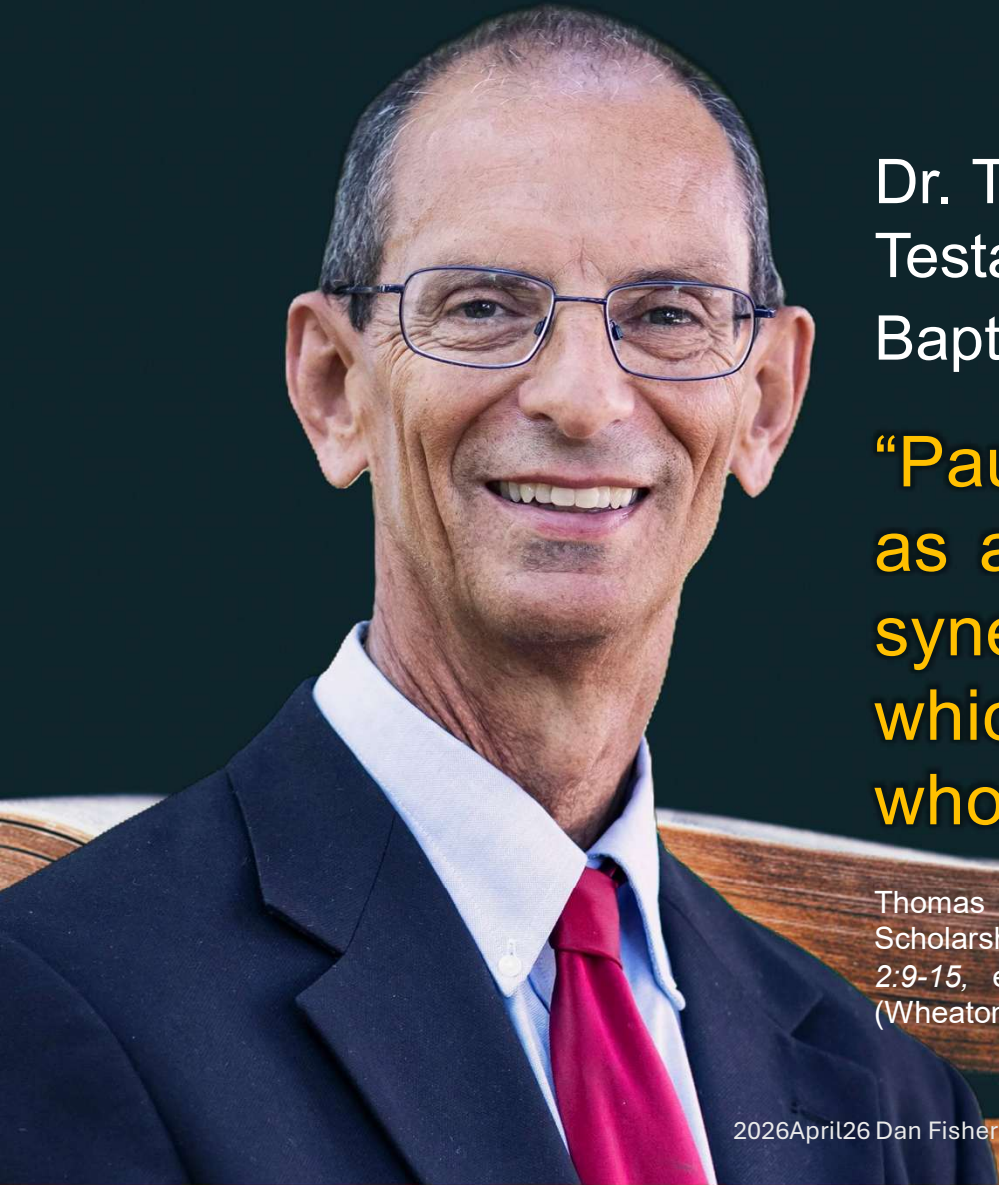
“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am.” **1 Cor 7:7-8**

2. What Paul likely meant

- Childbearing is only part of a woman's wider, special role to care for the home – a major part of which is to care for and help raise the children.

“and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.” **Titus 2:4-5**





Dr. Thomas Schreiner, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:

“Paul is likely using ‘childbearing’ as a figure of speech known as a synecdoche which is a figure in which the part stands for the whole.”

Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Tim 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 222.

- A wife who fulfills this role is giving evidence of her true faith
- “Saved” in this verse is in the future tense: “She will be saved”
- Paul is not talking of entry into salvation, but of the future consummation of salvation through sanctification



- Women who embrace their God-ordained role of bearing and raising children, while they continue in “faith and love and holiness, with self-control” will be greatly rewarded (saved) when they stand before the Lord

“if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” 1 Tim 2:15



Is it biblical to be baptized for someone who is dead?

“Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?” **1 Cor 15:29**

